

The Senior CHIT★CHAT



A Publication for East Harris County Senior Citizens from Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia

Spring 2007

Things to Know

Calling All Senior Golfers

The 10th annual Kim Worden Memorial Golf Classic is slated for Thursday, April 19 (rain date is April 26) at the River Terrace Golf Course located at 16777 Wallisville Rd.

This is a two-person team scramble tournament which will be flighted by team scores at the end of the event. The tournament is open to players ages 50 and up (no professionals) and will begin with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

continued on page 6



Serving the Channelview Community

Prior to 1981, seniors in the Channelview area held meetings in a one-room building which had no air conditioning. Things greatly improved in February 1981 with the opening of the V.V. Ramsey Center and even more space became available in June 1999 with the addition of the Martin L. Flukinger II Center. Today, the Ramsey & Flukinger Center is a hub of activity for members of the East Harris County Senior Citizens (EHCSC) and various community groups.

In addition to being a home for EHCSC members in Channelview, the Ramsey & Flukinger Center is used regularly by Channelview Senior Citizens, San Jacinto Congressional Study Group, Senior Quilters, North Channel Quilt Guild, Lion's Club, Women of the Channel, Special Ladies and Little League. Various health care screenings, flu shots and seminars



Senior citizen bingo always draws a crowd at Ramsey & Flukinger.

are offered throughout the year at the Center so seniors will have easy access to them. Precinct Two's Parks Administration and Youth Program offices are located in the Ramsey building.

Seniors have numerous programs to choose from at this Center including three levels of line dancing, exercise, crafts, jewelry making and ceramics classes. During 2007, the Center hopes to add art classes taught by a professional instructor.

continued on page 5

➤ Mark Your Calendar

The following are some major events for seniors taking place at Harris County Precinct Two community centers during March, April and May. The community/activity center which is hosting the event follows the name of each activity:

MARCH

March 1 Nursing

Home Domino

Party: San Jacinto

March 1 Gospel Night:

Flukinger

March 5-8 First week

of bus booking calls

March 12-15 Second

week of bus

booking calls

March 13 Gospel Night:

San Jacinto

March 14 White

Elephant Bingo: EHCAC

March 19 Gospel Night:

North East

March 21 Mardi Gras

Social: Walker

March 20-22 Inner City

Sr. Olympics: various

locations

March 22 Easter Party

and Cascarones Class:

San Jacinto

March 23 Nursing

Home Olympics:

Landolt Pavilion

March 23 Hometown

Opry ('50s Night):

EHCAC

March 30 EHCSC Fish

Fry Fundraiser: North

Shore Rotary Pavilion

APRIL

April 4 Inner City

Easter Party: EHCAC

April 5 Gospel Night:

Flukinger

April 10 Gospel Night:

San Jacinto

April 10 Volunteer

Banquet for Inner City/

NECC: North East

April 12 Spring Party:

San Jacinto

April 13 Tejano Dance:

North East

April 16 Gospel Night:

North East

April 19 Worden Golf
Tournament: River Ter-
race Golf Course

April 20 Inner City/NECC

Health Expo: North East

April 27 Hometown

Opry: EHCAC

April 30-May 4 North

Channel Sr. Olympics:

various locations

MAY

May 3 Gospel Night:

Flukinger

May 7 Cinco de Mayo

Party: Walker

May 8 Gospel Night:

San Jacinto

May 9 Inner City Fiesta
Party: EHCAC

May 10 Mother's Day

Luncheon: San Jacinto

May 11 Mother's Day

Tea: North East

May 15 Nursing Home

Party: North East

May 21 Gospel Night:

North East

May 24 Nursing Home

Party: Walker

May 25 Hometown

Opry: EHCAC

May 30: Flukinger/

Grayson Mother's &

Father's Day Lunch:

Flukinger

Monthly Dances – These dances are fund raisers
for the East Harris County Senior Citizens:

Second Monday:

North East

Second Thursday:

Grayson

Third Tuesday:

Bay Area (ballroom dancing)

Third Thursday:

East Harris County
(country-and-western dancing)

Fourth Friday:

San Jacinto (Pick 'N Grin
Band), no charge to attend

Chit-Chat info:

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Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia East Harris County Senior Citizens President

The Texas Legislature is back in session. Some folks joke that you need to hold on to your wallet when this body is meeting! Part of the unique "charm" of the Texas Constitution is that lawmakers are required to gather only for a few months in odd-numbered years. It has been argued that this keeps them from passing too many laws, while others counter that it's hard to conduct the business of modern-day Texas in such a compressed window. Nevertheless, this is our system for better or worse.

Making sure our elected representatives best serve our needs is not a function of the calendar. A more effective motivation for them is knowing that you are watching and involved. That's why I was so excited when hundreds of you went to Austin a few weeks ago to make your voices heard, and to let the legislature know that you were monitoring their actions.

I was very pleased to address a large number of you on the morning of your trip. One of the things I always tell our youth is that they need to be actively involved in the political process because it has such a major impact in their lives.

But this is equally true of our seniors, and I will be using your continuing participation as an example to follow.

Yes, we do have to watch our wallets when the Legislature is meeting. We in county government know that a favorite method of balancing the state budget is to shift expensive programs to counties and cities. But we will not just be fighting these so-called unfunded mandates, we will be seeking the authority to enhance our health care system by adding on a small fee to all international wire transfers (thus avoiding having to ask the taxpayers for more money). And we'll be working on a wide range of other issues, everything from dangerous dogs to clean air.

Thank you for taking the time to be a contributing member of our democratic society, be it by traveling to Austin, writing your congressman or attending one of my Town Hall meetings. Your involvement is more than necessary, it is inspiring.




Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia (Front row, sixth from right) met with East Harris County Senior Citizens before they boarded the buses for Senior Day 2007 on Feb. 13 in Austin. On this day, seniors are recognized for the contributions they make to the state of Texas and get the chance to see the Texas Legislature in session.

Senior Day 2007

★ VINCENT JACOBS ★

A Pioneering Rodeo Cowboy

“Being in the rodeos gave me the chance to go to many places and I enjoyed it,” explained long-time cowboy Vincent Jacobs. “Sure, there were some rough times but that was o.k. Nothing held me back.”

It was in the late 1940s that a lifetime love for the rodeo and for riding bulls and horses first began for Jacobs. A native of Huffman, Jacobs had been raised on a farming ranch and as a teenager, he had the opportunity to ride a bull in a rodeo. “The first bull I got on was in Cleveland, Texas, and that bull hooked me on the chin and busted my lip so I couldn’t talk but that didn’t stop me from riding,” said Jacobs. “The next day, I entered another rodeo and was the only one of seven riders who didn’t get bucked off. I walked away with a \$16 prize which was a lot of money in those times.”

After staying on that first bull, Jacobs spent the next 24 years riding bulls and bucking horses in rodeos in Texas, Oklahoma, California and Colorado. “I was 16-years-old when I first went on the rodeo circuit,” said Jacobs. “I’d figured out what I wanted to do and I kept on going.”

Jacobs made a strong impression on the many people he met in years on the rodeo circuit and has many wonderful memories of those times, including being one of the first African-American cowboys to participate in the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo when it moved to the Astrodome.

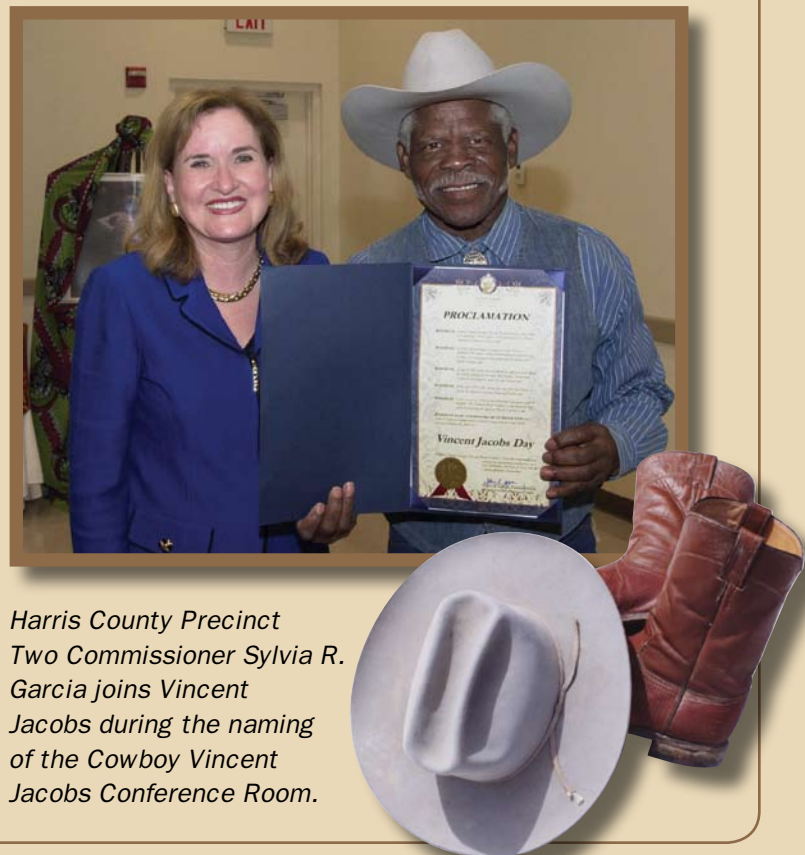
In 1972, Jacobs gave up the cowboy life and took a job with the City of Houston Water Department. Though he is no longer an active cowboy, Jacobs has shared his stories of life on the rodeo circuit with many through talks he has given to seniors, elementary-age children and college students.

Jacobs’ remarkable journey is included in the documentary, “Preserving the Legacy: African-American Cowboys in Texas.” The film

was so well received that it has been entered into the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

Jacobs has spent much of his adult life in the Barrett Station area. When Commissioner Garcia learned about Jacobs during a trip to Washington, D.C., and his inclusion in the National Museum of American History, she wanted to find a way to honor Jacobs. This led to the naming of the “Cowboy Vincent Jacobs Conference Room” at the Barrett Station Community Center and a Vincent Jacobs Day in Harris County Precinct Two.

“When I was on the plane to the Smithsonian when the film was being put in the museum, I asked God not to let this great honor go to my head and it never did,” said Jacobs. “I’ve always just tried to do everything that was in my heart and that which God blessed me to do.”



Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia joins Vincent Jacobs during the naming of the Cowboy Vincent Jacobs Conference Room.

Serving the Channelview Community

continued from the cover

Senior bingo and bunco matches occur on a regular basis and are very well attended. In its 10th year, the Center's Gospel Night is an extremely popular musical program that attracts a large audience every first Thursday of the month. Outings frequently departing from Ramsey & Flukinger for EHCSC members include shopping, trips to the theater for musicals and plays, museum tours, visits to other local towns and a monthly supper club.

Every weekday, two Precinct Two center vans go out into the community and bring seniors back to participate in the congregate meals program offered at Ramsey & Flukinger. The Center sends meals out each weekday to homebound seniors in the Channelview area.

Several special events are planned at Ramsey & Flukinger for seniors in 2007. The Mother's and



Father's Day luncheon is scheduled for May 30 and an Uncle Sam party is set for July 11. A costume party with hobo stew is planned for later in the fall.

National Night Out, an annual gathering, will be held on the first Tuesday in August. "At our 2006 National Night Out, we had a country band, strolling mariachis, a moon bounce, duck pond, face painting and other games," explained Toni Drews, center director. "I think our 2007 National

Night Out program will be really great as we're expecting even more community involvement."

The Flukinger building is available for rental for special events of up to 300 guests while the Ramsey building is available for meetings for service groups. The gazebo located behind the Ramsey building is a favorite spot for wedding photos.

If you live in the Channelview area, check out the Ramsey & Flukinger Center with a tour or call 281-457-1810 for more information.

Bring Your Appetite for the 2007 Fish Fry

Many EHCSC members have enjoyed the annual Fish Fry that traditionally has been a major fund raiser for the North Channel program. For 2007, the Fish Fry will benefit the East Harris County Senior Citizens precinct-wide program as the organization joins together to host this fun event.

Set for Friday, March 30, from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., the EHCSC Fish Fry will be held at the North Shore Rotary Pavilion at 14350½ Wallisville Rd. A fish dinner will be available for \$7 per plate and will include catfish, hush puppies, potato salad and baked beans. Pre-ordered take-outs are available as well as deliveries when you order 10 or more plates. For information on delivery or take-outs, call 281-452-7598.

In addition to the delicious meal, there will be a plant sale, bake sale and garage/book sale (this function begins at 9 a.m.).

A Lifelong Passion for Working with Seniors

The Chit-Chat's Featured Employee: Julie Connella



"My husband says I eat, sleep and dream senior programming," explained Julie Connella, director of the San Jacinto & Highlands Community Center. "We can't go anywhere without me finding something that I can use for the program!"

Connella has been in her director position for the past two years but has been interested in the position since she learned about the program 20 years ago. When she heard about the opening at San Jacinto & Highlands, she knew it was the perfect time in her life to pursue this wonderful opportunity. Prior to working in this position, she spent 13 years as a compact officer for the Harris County Community Supervisions Corrections department.

Connella oversees the day-to-day activities at both the San Jacinto and Highlands facilities which includes planning activities for the more than 100 seniors who routinely use the Centers. One of the most popular classes she implemented has been a jewelry-making class. "Before this class, many of our seniors didn't know each other because they only did one activity such as table games or shopping," said Connella. "The jewelry-making class gives them the chance to

get to know each other and make something they can use outside the Center." Connella has helped three other Precinct Two community centers begin their own jewelry-making class.

One of the best things about Connella's job is the chance she has to interact with the EHCSC members. "I look forward to each day because I learn something new from my seniors," explained Connella. "Being at the Center has taught me that you're never too old to learn something new. It's such an honor to give 100 percent to this job as it's serving people I've always admired as well as working with a wonderful staff."

When she's not at San Jacinto & Highlands, Connella enjoys spending time with her husband, a deputy in Constable Bill Bailey's office, her four daughters and her one grandson, and the occasional day spent with a good book.

Connella's contagious enthusiasm is an example of the old saying, "good things come to those who wait." "Seniors have been my lifelong passion," said Connella. "I just had to take a long road to get to this wonderful job."

Things to Know *continued from the cover*

The \$30 per player entry fee covers green fees, golf cart, balls, sack lunch and door prizes. Hole sponsorships are available at a cost of \$100 per sign.

For more information on this event or to receive an entry form, call 281-452-7598.

2007 Senior Olympics Schedule

Several Precinct Two facilities will be the sites for Senior Olympics' programs over the coming months. Events will be held on:

- Inner City: March 20 – 22
- Nursing Home Olympics: March 23
- North Channel: April 30 – May 4
- South Channel: Oct 23 – Oct. 26

The Nursing Home Olympics is looking for volunteers who would like to help out on this special day. Call 281-479-4232 for more information.

The mission of the East Harris County Senior Citizens is to "encourage social and physical activeness among senior citizens to better enable them to remain a contributing and viable force in their communities." Our Senior Olympics are one way we are able to meet this goal.



Helpful Resources on the Internet

The World Wide Web has made it easier for everyone to get information without having to leave the computer. Following are some organizations that provide information or services which may be useful to you:

> Tax Relief for Elderly Homeowners

<http://www.hcad.org/Resources/Exemptions/Elderly.asp>
713-224-1919

There are four types of tax relief available to homeowners over age 65 in Harris County. Visit this Web site for more details and for forms needed to take advantage of these exemptions.

> Rebuilding Together Houston

<http://www.rebuildingtogetherhouston.org>
713-659-2511

This organization provides home repair services for low income, elderly and/or disabled Houston Area homeowners at no charge to the homeowner. To qualify, the property must be a detached single-family dwelling in Houston or East Harris County that requires necessary repairs and the client must be elderly or disabled, own and live in the home, and be on a low fixed income.

> Texas Master Gardener's

<http://www.texasmastergardeners.com>
Spring is just around the corner and the Texas Master Gardener's have many events coming up that will help you spruce up your garden (click on the newsletter link for the various county newsletters). Another great source of information for what grows well in Southeast Texas is Aggie Horticulture (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>). The Texas SuperStar page is a collection of plants that flourish in this area.

> Who Represents Me in the Texas Legislature?

<http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>
The Texas Legislature is in session until May 28, 2007. If you're interested in contacting your representatives but aren't sure who they are, visit this Web site. By inputting your address, you'll get a list that includes current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House

of Representatives, U.S. House of Representatives and the State Board of Education.

> Harris County Public Library

<http://www.hcpl.net>
This site includes lists of events happening at each of the county's 26 libraries. You can access the library catalog, renew books online and read news related to books and the arts.

> Family Caregiver Alliance

<http://www.caregiver.org/>
For 30 years, the Family Caregiver Alliance has addressed the needs of families and friends providing long-term care at home. This Web site has an extensive collection of articles and fact sheets that provide information for caregivers.

> Houston Astros

<http://houston.astros.mlb.com>
The Astros' home opener is just a few weeks away. If you're a baseball fan, visit the Astros' Web site to see their 2007 schedule and catch up with the news on the team.





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Houston, TX 77015

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**The East Harris County
Senior Citizens welcomes
all new participants!**

EHCS serves Harris County
Precinct Two seniors in Barrett
Station, Baytown, Channelview,
Clear Lake, Crosby, Deer Park,
El Lago, Galena Park, Highlands,
Houston, Jacinto City, LaPorte,
McNair, Morgan's Point, Nassau
Bay, North Shore, Pasadena,
Seabrook, Sheldon, Shore Acres,
South Houston, Taylor Lake
Village and Webster.

*East Harris County Senior Citizens
is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.*

★ DIRECTORY ★

Department of Community Centers & Senior Programming

Department of Community
Centers & Senior
Programming
713-455-4869

Inner City Program
713-514-0185

North Channel Program
281-452-7598

Nursing Home Program
281-479-4232

South Channel Program
281-479-4232

Transportation
Voucher Program
281-326-2955

Barrett Station &
Riley Chambers
Community Centers
281-328-4713

Bay Area
Community Center
281-326-2955

East Harris County
Activity Center
281-479-4232

Grayson Community Center
713-455-3660

North East
Community Center
281-442-7950

Ramsey & Flukinger
Community Center
281-457-1810

San Jacinto & Highlands
Community Centers
281-426-7561

Walker Community Center
281-426-3551

**Harris County Precinct Two
Transportation Department**
281-452-6071

Veterans Services
281-426-2832 or
281-843-2019